

WASHINGTON FAMILIES FUND SYSTEMS INITIATIVE EVALUATION

In Their Voice:

*Suggestions for Systems Change from King County
Families*

*Family Homelessness Initiative Advisory Group
May 21, 2015*

Key Evaluation Areas of Focus

Intervention
Implementation

Effects on Systems
and Organizations

Effects on Families

Effects on Costs and
Costs Shifts



King County Family Impact Study

Sample

Purpose

“Baseline” cohort of families

To be compared to an “Intervention” cohort

156 families at Baseline

Speak English or Spanish

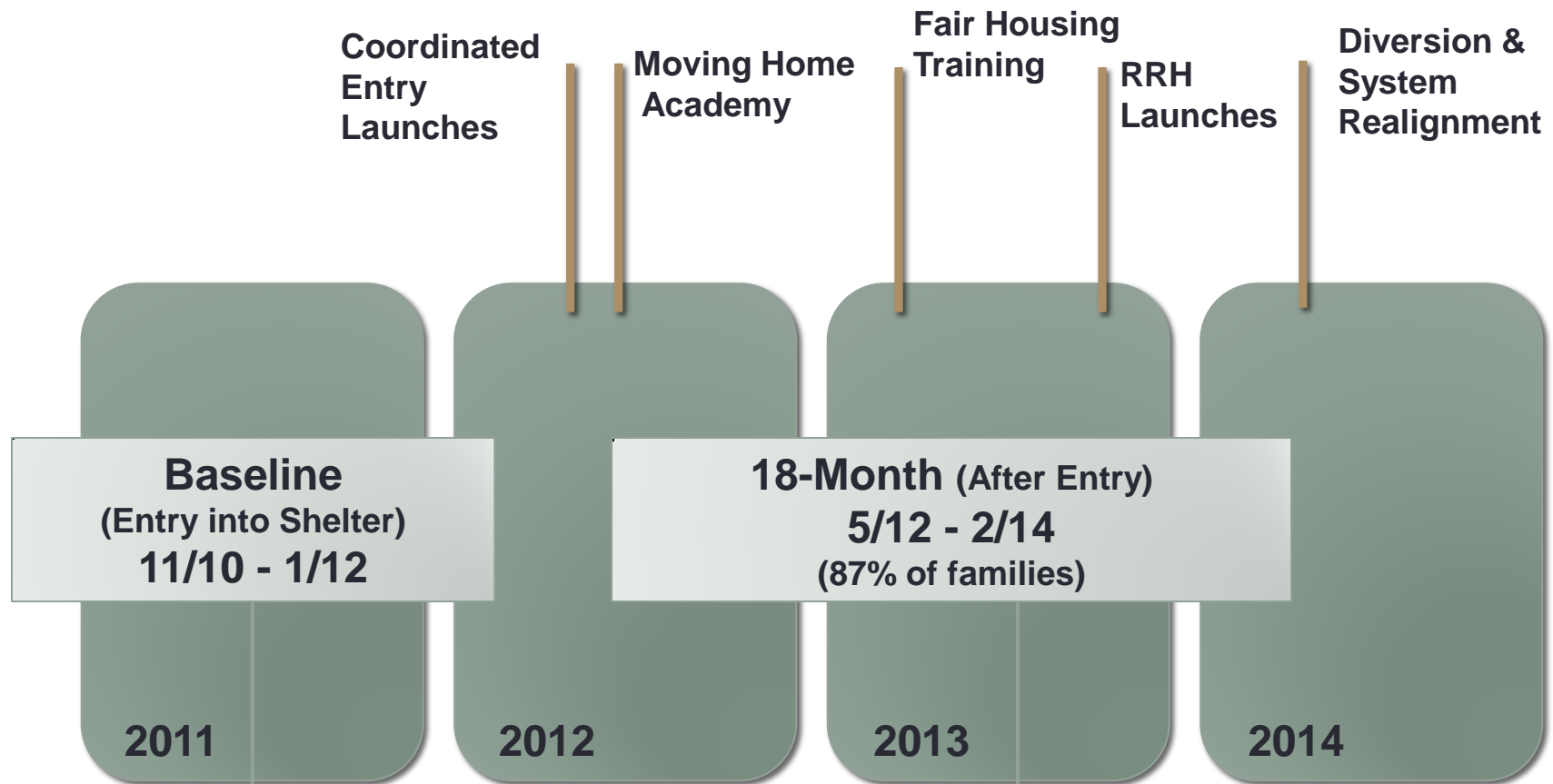
Recruited from 11/10 to 1/12

Data Collection

Heads of Household

4 waves of data
(B, 6M, 12M, 18M)

Data Collection: Cohort 1 (156 families)



If you could only name 1 thing that you believe could help your family get back on its feet, what would it be?

What are 3 ways your family life is better or worse than when you first entered shelter?

What change would you make to the system to help families make it on their own?

Getting Back on One's Feet

Common Responses

Getting a job/Stable employment/Job training (32%)

Affordable housing or subsidies (26%)

Money and financial help (17%)

Car/Gas card/Driver's license (6%)

College/Education/GED (4%)

Support services/Case management (4%)

Family related assistance (3%)

Health and behavioral health services (2%)

God/Faith (1%)

Miscellaneous (3%)

Family's Life 18 Months After Entering Shelter

Better

% of respondents said all
positive things

King County: 86%

Tri-County: 81%

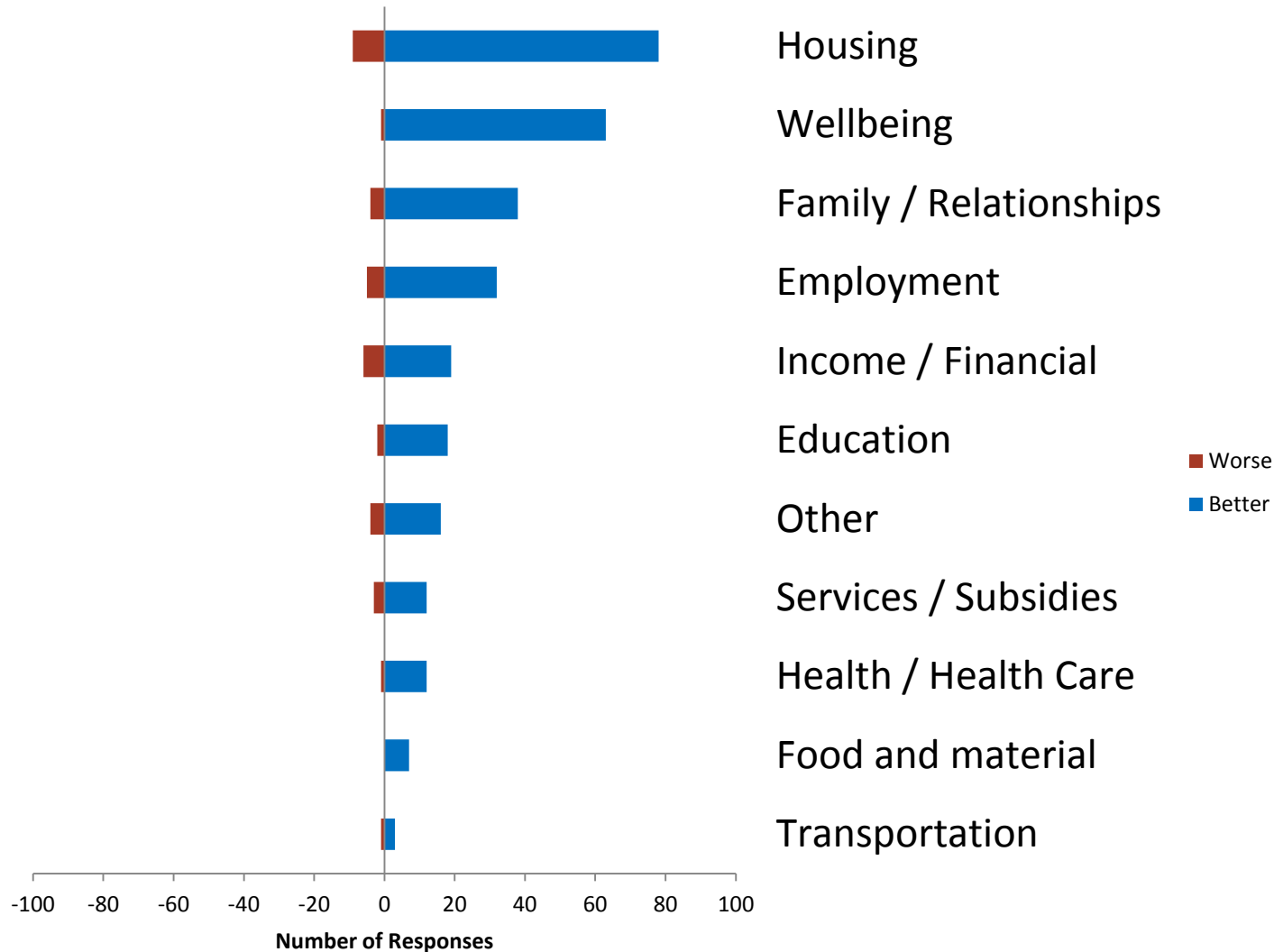
Worse

% gave 1 or more negative
responses

King County: 14%

Tri-County: 19%

Family's Life Better or Worse ?



Housing – Better or Worse

Better Examples (n=78)

- “Have our own place”
- “Roof over our head”
- “Stable house”
- “Everybody feels settled, this is home”
- “Not in shelter”
- “Have a permanent place to live”

Worse Examples (n=9)

- “Don’t have housing”
- “House is too small”
- “Don’t have stable housing”



Well-Being – Better or Worse

Better Examples (n=63)

- “Emotionally better”
- “More focused”
- “Happier”
- “Kids feel safe and secure”
- “Stable”
- “Not stressed as a family”
- “Better communication”

Worse Examples (n=1)

- “Stress”



Family/Relationships – Better or Worse

Better Examples (n=38)

- “No longer in a custody battle”
- “All together”
- “Her child’s dad is involved with family”
- “Spend more time with kids”
- “Family has gotten closer”
- “Relationship got better”

Worse Examples (n=4)

- “In destructive relationship”
- “Situation with kids/CPS”
- “Kids will be moving in with Dad”
- “Family problems”



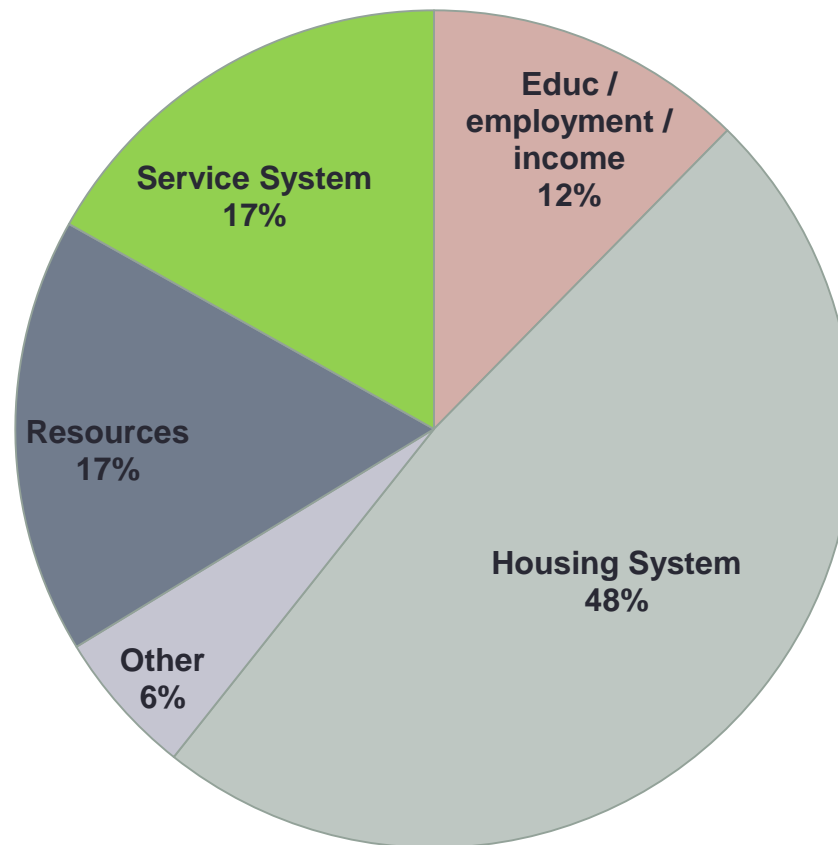
What one CHANGE would you make to the SYSTEM to help families make it on their own?

Among 132 respondents:

- 89% gave one or more suggestions/comments
- 7% said the system is already working well
- 5% said they did not know what to suggest

Changing the System

Categories of Responses



Changing the System

Housing system

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

“Make rental/credit history more lenient.”

“Make it easier for people to get into housing even if they have criminal history or debt.”

SYSTEM ENTRY PROCESS

“Shorter waitlist to get into housing.”

“Housing should be on priority, not lottery.”

HOUSING RESOURCES

“Better resources for housing.”

“More housing programs.”

“More availability of affordable housing in good neighborhoods.”

Changing the System

Housing system (cont.)

SHELTER RULES

“Homeless shelters less strict - no time limit. More shelters for working families. Less restrictions.”

OTHER POPULATIONS

“More focus on the people that are showing improvement /initiative but need a little push to take it to the next level... People who have substance abuse/cps cases get more help & that doesn't seem fair.”

“More housing programs for people with disabilities.”

“I'd make sure there are more funds available for single parents-single fathers too.”

Changing the System

Service system

CASE MANAGEMENT

Case managers...

“could be more involved: looking for work, schools and housing.”

“treated me like I was trying to abuse the system.”
[Have] assumptions about homelessness.”

“Amount of time you have w [them]; see them even after case is closed.”

PROVIDERS

“Streamline the management. Have a clearing house. Don't have 5 million different agencies.”

COMMUNICATION

“Change how the different organizations communicate. The organizations don't communicate b/w each other. They don't know what services each provide.”

“Be more efficient and make promised deadlines.”

Changing the System

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, & INCOME

“Provide more financial services.”

“Encourage people to find way to earn more income.”

“Help with job search.”

“Intense job training for jobs that are not low wage.”

Changing the System

RESOURCES

- “Provide more funding services and there has been too many budget cuts.”
- “More money.”
- “Don’t strip benefits.”
- “Services should be more available.”
- “Hard to find money for the security deposit. Too big a requirement for a homeless person coming from transitional and the agencies that provide money are very religious. Also, agencies are open very limited hours for calling in—hard to coordinate everything.”

Summary/Next Steps

- Jobs, housing, and income rank at the top of families' suggestions for becoming stable.
- Families see improvements in their lives 18 months after entering shelter, specifically around housing, well-being, and their relationships.
- The most common suggestion for improvements to the system center on service eligibility and access, and availability of affordable housing.
- Additional analyses will examine how families' responses relate to their housing situation and other factors, such as employment and health.